

## Jobs & Economy

### Washingtonians

work hard and deserve the opportunity to earn wages and benefits that can support their families. I believe one of my most important responsibilities is to promote family wage jobs and an economic climate that encourages business growth and job creation.

Throughout my tenure in Congress, I've worked hard to support programs that help small businesses grow. I've supported common sense tax reforms to help small businesses get off the ground and stay afloat, and I voted to reduce the paperwork burden on small businesses. I have also supported legislation to make health care more affordable and available to small businesses and their employees.

One of my greatest successes as an elected official came when I succeeded in reinstating state sales tax deductibility on federal income tax returns. This deduction has pumped \$1 billion back into the pockets of Washington state taxpayers. That's good for families, good for business, and good for jobs.

### Restoring Sales Tax Deductibility

Congressman Baird continues working to ensure that Washington State residents are able to deduct their state sales taxes from their federal income taxes. Restoring fairness to the tax code and making sure Washington State residents are treated equitably by the tax system will continue to be one of the Congressman's top priorities. Congressman Baird feels very strongly that his constituents should be treated equally under the law by the federal government, regardless of the local tax system elected by the state government.

Because of Congressman Baird's leadership, for the first time in almost two decades Washington state taxpayers can now deduct state sales tax from their federal income tax returns. This deduction saves Washington state families more than \$350 million every year on their federal income tax returns.

To pass this law, Congressman Baird worked tirelessly to build a strong bipartisan coalition of lawmakers from seven states that, like Washington, have state sales taxes but no state income tax. Congressman Baird succeeded in changing the law and making sales tax deductibility a reality for the last four years. A fellow member of Congress declared

Congressman Baird the "father of sales tax deductibility."

As a Member of the Budget Committee, Congressman Baird was successful in working with his colleagues from both sides of the aisle to ensure that a provision allowing for the ten year extension of the sales tax deduction was included in the Fiscal Year 2009 Budget. This is an important next step towards making sales tax deductibility permanent.

In addition, one of Congressman Baird's first acts in the 110th Congress was to reintroduce legislation to make the sales tax deduction permanent. This legislation has attracted a large number of bipartisan cosponsors from sales tax states. Congressman Baird will continue to push for passage of this important legislation.

#### Providing Capital for Small Businesses

Access to affordable financing and capital is one of the chief obstacles preventing small business growth. Congressman Baird has championed the Business Retained Income During Growth and Expansion (BRIDGE) Act to allow fast-growing small and mid-sized businesses to defer a portion of their federal income tax liability for two years in order to invest the money in the growth of their businesses. When implemented, this proposal is expected to create over 900,000 new jobs in three years. It will also generate new revenue for the federal government when the deferred taxes are gradually paid back with interest by the businesses.

#### Helping Small Businesses Get Started

Small businesses can be a vehicle to make dreams a reality, but they can also be a nightmare of tax burdens and paperwork. To help small businesses start off well and continue to grow, Congressman Baird introduced the Start Up Success Accounts (SUSA) Act. Structured to help small businesses, SUSA accounts would allow business owners to defer taxes on some of their income for each of the first five years the business is open. This proactive program allows businesses to plan for and anticipate new expenses or potential downturns. Businesses can use the SUSA accounts as collateral for competitive loans to expand or draw from the account during difficult times, rather than go further into debt.

#### Preserving Our Buy America Law

Congressman Baird has fought to preserve the "Buy America" provision in our federal transportation laws. The Buy America law requires that federally-funded transportation projects use domestic iron and steel. The law was put into place to ensure that, when taxpayer money is spent on highway projects, these expenditures stimulate United States production and job creation.

Buy America is important because it helps working men and women in Southwest Washington and throughout the United States keep their jobs and earn decent, living wages. Buy America also strengthens our domestic steel industry, which is critical to our national security and necessary for our ability to rebuild after a devastating natural disaster or terrorist attack.

Congressman Baird learned that some states and the Federal Highway Administration were attempting to evade Buy America requirements and use foreign steel. He introduced legislation that would strengthen enforcement of the Buy America law. He has also called for congressional oversight hearings, met with Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta, and sent letters to President Bush, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, and Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez.

### Preventing the Loss of Manufacturing Jobs

Rep. Baird is deeply concerned by the loss of American manufacturing jobs and believes the Congress and President should review all U.S. trade agreements to ensure that our trading partners comply with those agreements. To that end, Congressman Baird believes our government must:

- Review China's World Trade Organization (WTO) accession agreement, to ensure full compliance by our trading partners.
- Press our Asian trading partners to stop manipulating their currencies to gain trade advantages.
- Support tax advantages for U.S. manufacturers that produce goods domestically and repeal tax breaks that encourage U.S. companies to incorporate overseas.
- Refuse to sign future trade agreements that lack the International Labor Organization core labor standards and stringent environmental protections.
- Ensure foreign governments do not violate trade obligations by unfairly subsidizing their exports to the U.S.
- Strengthen technical education for our students in vocational schools and community colleges and provide training for workers who have been displaced by foreign trade.

### Raising the Minimum Wage

Congressman Baird believes that workers in this country should earn a living wage that can support a family. Unfortunately, under the federal minimum wage, employees who work 40 hours a week would earn only \$10,712 a year, an income that is \$2,600 below the poverty level for a family of three.

That is why Congressman Baird was a cosponsor of the Fair Minimum Wage Act. This legislation gradually raises the minimum wage from \$5.15 an hour to \$7.25 an hour over 26 months. In 2007, this important legislation was passed by the House and Senate and signed into law.

### Reducing the Cost of Health Care

Because of the high cost of health care coverage, many businesses simply cannot afford to provide insurance to their employees. At the same time, workers are finding it harder and harder to afford the every-rising cost of health insurance.

Congressman Baird believes that we must reform the health care system in order to lower skyrocketing costs and expand coverage to the nearly 47 million Americans who are currently uninsured.

To achieve these goals, Congressman Baird has introduced bipartisan legislation called the Healthy Americans Act. The Healthy Americans Act is a comprehensive health care proposal. The proposal maintains consumer choice and guarantees private health care coverage that cannot be taken away and is at least as good as that offered to Members of Congress and Senators.

The Healthy Americans Act guarantees private health insurance for all Americans by:

- Ensuring that every American has a high-quality, private health care plan that is comparable to what Members of Congress now enjoy.
- Establishing a sliding scale of health care premium assistance for low-income Americans.
- Creating a health care tax credit to help Americans cover the cost of their health care plan.
- Requiring every American to purchase a private health care plan.

The Healthy Americans Act eliminates the link between employment and health care by:

- Ending the employer health care tax deduction and replacing it with a personal tax credit.
- Requiring employers who currently provide employee health benefits to convert their health care premiums into higher wages that employees will use to purchase their own private health insurance for the first four years.

- Requiring employers to make payments to the federal government, on a sliding scale depending on the number of employees, to fund premium subsidies. Employers who do not currently provide health benefits will be required to begin making phased-in payments immediately; after four years, all employers will be making these payments.

The Healthy Americans Act protects consumers by:

- Prohibiting discrimination against beneficiaries based on health status or genetics.
- Allowing plans to use financial incentives to reward beneficiaries who enroll in wellness programs or otherwise pursue a healthy lifestyle.
- Establishing a Health Help Agency in each state to coordinate payments from employers, individuals and government; coordinate enrollment of individuals in private health care plans; and provide consumers with unbiased information about competing health care plans.
- Requiring insurers to use standardized common forms to make health care more transparent for consumers.
- Providing additional research and education efforts on the comparative effectiveness of health care items to ensure that consumers receive effective, quality care.
- Allowing beneficiaries to purchase additional coverage above and beyond the federal standard if they choose.
- Maintaining employer-based retiree health plan for individuals who are already retired and Medicare, and preserving health plans negotiated as part of a collective bargaining agreement for as long as nine years.

The Healthy Americans Act reallocates federal resources by:

- Phasing out the Disproportionate Share Hospital payments program, which provides compensation to hospitals treating the uninsured. Universal coverage will obviate the need for this program.
- Phasing out the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) in favor of coverage under the Healthy Americans Act.
- Ending non-supplemental Medicaid and providing basic health care for low income Americans.

According to a comprehensive review and score by the nonpartisan Lewin Group, the Healthy Americans Act will increase coverage and decrease costs by:

- Providing health care coverage to 99% of Americans.
- Cutting national spending on health care, both public and private, and creating a long term savings of \$1.48 trillion over the next ten years.

Bureau  
of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

Washington  
State Department of Licensing - Firearms

LOKITUP - Promote  
the Safe Storage of Firearms

Gun  
Safety for Kids

More  
Gun Safety for Kids